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S E C R E T AMMAN 007830

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TREASURY FOR DAS ZARATE
TREASURY FOR OASIA -- MILLS, NUGENT, DEMOPULOS
NSC FOR KIFAYAT
CPA FOR WOLFE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/02/2008

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SUBJECT: JORDAN: FOLLOWUP WITH PM ON FROZEN ASSETS ISSUE

REF: AMMAN 7691

Classified By: David Hale, Charge d'affaires, a.i. Reasons 1.5 b and d
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1. (S) Charge and ECON/C called on Prime Minister Fayez December 2 to follow-up on the discussion of Iraq assets issues during A/S Burns visit (septel). Adding a new element, the PM said that the GOJ "technical committee" evaluating Jordanian trade claims against Iraq now hoped to finish its work in "about one month." At that time, Fayez said, the entire amount remaining not subject to (accepted) claims would be transferred to the Development Fund for Iraq. In the meantime, Fayez said another \$35 million would be transferred to the DFI within two weeks "as a sign of goodwill." Asked about the prior commitment to transfer \$150 million quickly, the PM reiterated that the full amount not subject to accepted claims would be transferred in about a month. Asked by the Charge if Iraqis could participate in the evaluation of the claims, the PM said that would not be a problem. The Charge said he would pursue this with Finance Minister Abu Hammour.

2 (S) The Prime Minister said that it was very important that the issue of the \$1.3 billion in Central Bank claims be addressed. He looked forward to receiving a USG team empowered to discuss this issue. He added that he would welcome Iraqi participation in this team.

3. (S) The Charge asked for additional GOJ assistance to the Treasury team currently in Amman tracking Iraqi assets. In particular, the Charge transmitted the team's request for information on international wire transfers into and out of Iraqi accounts and provided a list of additional accounts on which the team would like transaction and wire transfer information. The Prime Minister replied that he had thought that former Prime Minister Abul Ragheb had made it clear to U.S. officials in Washington in August that bank secrecy laws prevented any further Jordanian assistance on these "private" accounts, and that the matter was closed. The Charge and ECON/C explained that we were only interested in accounts that had already been identified by the GOJ and on which the GOJ had already provided information. Fayez said he would discuss the issue with Abul Ragheb and get back to us. (We left an aide-memoire detailing the request.)

4. (S) Comment: The Prime Minister appeared confused on all the issues discussed, and muddled them. We will try to make progress with Deputy Prime Minister Halaiga and Finance Minister Abu Hammour. It could also be useful if U.S. officials find an appropriate opportunity to raise these issues -- particularly the request for assistance in tracking assets -- with Jordanian ministers in Washington this week. We look forward to receiving a U.S. team to discuss the \$1.3 billion issue, and agree that Iraqi participation could be useful.

HALE